

# Preparing Application B

## Things to Consider Before Applying

### Know what to expect

Read the Producer Diversification Overview (p. 3) which highlights the key aspects of the program.

### Determine if you are eligible to apply

Basic eligibility requirements and rules are featured on pp. 4 & 5. Review criteria for each sector. Each sector has a definition of who qualifies as a producer and sector specific applicant requirements.

### Determine if there is opportunity within this cost share program for your operation

One key element of this program is that it allows the producer to customize their project(s) according to the needs of their operation. Think about what improvement or expansions are needed to assist in increasing your farm income. Determine if this project is eligible for cost share within the program guidelines.

If the project is eligible, research the cost of the project and decide if your operation can afford to do this project. Your project may be eligible for cost share if approved, but the financial liability of completing the project is your responsibility. Approved projects must be completed prior to requesting reimbursement. **Cost share funding is not provided prior to project completion.**

The program timeline is another factor to consider. You will apply for cost share during the application period (October 1 – 7, 2021). Approval notifications will be announced in mid-December. Reimbursement packets will be mailed in January 2022. If you plan to complete the project regardless of whether it is approved for cost share, the earliest you may start your project is October 1, 2021. Invoices dated **prior** to October 1, 2021 are not eligible per TAEF Reimbursement Requirements.

The reimbursement request deadline is August 1, 2022. Your approved project(s) must be fully completed and reimbursement materials submitted by this deadline to be considered for cost share funding. **It is recommended you submit your reimbursement request as soon as your project is complete.** It is not necessary to wait until the reimbursement request deadline. Processing payments can take longer at deadline time due to the high volume of requests received.

### Make the most of application tools to maximize your chances of approval

This program is competitive by industry sector. Each application will be reviewed by a committee and compared to other proposals within each sector. Your ability to describe your operation and justify how your project(s) will benefit your operation is important to increasing your chances of approval.

Applications must merit financial support, clearly state objectives, provide a sound work plan, and prove applicant expertise necessary to successfully complete project(s). **Only complete applications that include sufficient information will be considered for evaluation.** An on-site visit or meeting may be required as part of the evaluation process. **All committee decisions are final.**

**It is recommended to request the proposal questionnaire template** (see p. 19 – required materials). This template provides the format and questionnaire required for your proposal. The proposal instructions (pp. 20 – 21) give key points to address within each question. Remember that the proposal is your opportunity to share who you are, what you do, and how your operation will benefit from cost share assistance.

Provide a comprehensive, yet concise, answer on each section of the questionnaire. Research all project costs and provide cost sources along with cost estimates. **Incomplete information is the number one reason for not receiving cost share funds.** Ask someone to review your application materials for completeness. Please note that TDA staff cannot review proposals prior to submission.

Communication is the key to success. Please contact TAEF directly if you have any questions or concerns by emailing [producer.diversification@tn.gov](mailto:producer.diversification@tn.gov). The reference list on p. 24 provides additional resources.